

Appl. No. 10/811,696
Atty. Docket No. 9533
Response, dated October 18, 2005
Reply to Office Action of October 5, 2005
Customer No. 27752

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph at Page 16, line 32-Page 17, line 24 as follows:

FIG. 4 is a plan view of yet another exemplary, non-limiting embodiment of a diaper 320 of the present invention in its flat-out, uncontracted state (i.e., without elastic induced contraction) with the backsheet 326, which contacts the wearer's garment, shown facing the viewer. Similar to FIG. 3, diaper 320 has a first backsheet zone 360, a second backsheet zone 370 and a third backsheet zone 380. First backsheet zone 360 is disposed primarily in the crotch region 337 and front waist region 336. Second backsheet zone 370 is disposed primarily in the distal portion of back waist region 338. Third backsheet zone 380 is disposed primarily in the back waist region 338 with at least a portion extending into buttocks region 339. Third backsheet zone 380 has a lower basis weight, thickness, or density than second backsheet zone 370 which has a lower basis weight, thickness, or density than first backsheet zone 360. Third backsheet zone 380 is such designed to conform to the outward-protruding buttocks of the wearer. Diaper 320 also has an elastomeric element 390 which overlaps and is joined to a portion of second backsheet zone 370 and third backsheet zone 380, thus forming two discrete stretch zones 372, 382 having a primary direction of stretch in the lateral direction as indicated by arrow 373. In this way, only a single elastomeric element 390 is needed to create a first stretch zone 372 and a second stretch zone 382. Stretch zone 372 (i.e., second backsheet zone 370 combined with elastomeric element 390) is located near the distal portion of back waist region 338 so as to anchor the diaper 320 to the lower backside of the wearer, discussed infra. Stretch zone 382 (i.e., third backsheet zone ~~370~~ 380 combined with elastomeric element 390) is located longitudinally inboard of stretch zone 372 and substantially, laterally-aligned with fastening elements 355. Being more extensible than stretch zone 372, stretch zone 382 facilitates the lateral pulling of fastening elements 355 by the wearer or caregiver particularly during application and the generation of a line of tension between the fastening elements; whereas, stretch zone 372 continues to provide anchoring within the back waist region 338 and prevents gapping at the back waist edge. In a non-limiting example, the absorbent core (not shown) is either affixed to backsheet 326 in the third backsheet zone 380 along longitudinal centerline 1000 or not at all. In another non-limiting example, the absorbent core (not shown) does not extend into the second backsheet zone 370.

Please amend the paragraph at Page 17, line 25-Page 18, line 16 as follows:

FIG. 5 is a plan view of yet another exemplary, non-limiting embodiment of a diaper 420 of the present invention in its flat-out, uncontracted state (i.e., without elastic induced contraction) with the backsheet 426, which contacts the wearer's garment, shown facing the viewer. Similar to

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FIG. 3, diaper 420 has a first backsheet zone 460, a second backsheet zone 470 and a third backsheet zone 480. First backsheet zone 460 is disposed primarily in the crotch region 437 and front waist region 436. Second backsheet zone 470 is disposed primarily in the distal portion of back waist region 438. Third backsheet zone 480 is disposed primarily in the back waist region 438 with at least a portion extending into buttocks region 439. Third backsheet zone 480 has a lower basis weight, thickness, or density than second backsheet zone 470 which has a lower basis weight, thickness, or density than first backsheet zone 460. Third backsheet zone 480 is such designed to conform to the outward-protruding buttocks of the wearer. Diaper 420 also has a first elastomeric element 490 which overlaps and is joined to a portion of second backsheet zone 470, thus forming a first stretch zone 472 having a primary direction of stretch in the lateral direction as indicated by arrow 473. Additionally, diaper 420 has a second elastomeric element 493 which overlaps and is joined to a portion of third backsheet zone 480, thus forming a second stretch zone 482 having a primary direction of stretch in a non-linear (e.g., substantially u-shaped) configuration as indicated by arrow 483. In this way, two elastomeric elements 490, 493 are used to create a first stretch zone 472 and a second stretch zone 482, respectively. Stretch zone 472 (i.e., second backsheet zone 470 combined with elastomeric element 490) is located near the distal portion of back waist region 438 so as to anchor the diaper 420 to the lower backside of the wearer, discussed infra. Stretch zone 482 (i.e., third backsheet zone ~~470~~ 480 combined with elastomeric element 490) is located longitudinally inboard of stretch zone 472 so as to provide contoured stretch within the buttocks region 439. In a non-limiting example, the absorbent core (not shown) is either affixed to backsheet 426 in the third backsheet zone 480 along longitudinal centerline 1000 or not at all. In another non-limiting example, the absorbent core (not shown) does not extend into the second backsheet zone 470.

Please amend the paragraph at Page 20, line 26-Page 21, line 17 as follows:

FIG. 9 is a plan view of the exemplary, non-limiting embodiment diaper 620 from **FIG. 7**. **FIG. 10a** is a schematic, cross-sectional view of diaper 620 from **FIG. 9** being worn as illustrated along line 10-10 in **FIG. 11**. For purposes of **FIG. 10a**, diaper 620 is illustrated as a diaper having a front-fastened product execution which may or may not be preformed. Ears 697 are shown having stretch properties in the lateral direction as indicated by arrows 698. It has been discovered that diaper 620 provides better conformity and sustained fit when a first stretch region (e.g., second backsheet zone 670) having lateral stretch as indicated by vector 673 ~~[[preferentially]]~~ co-elongates ~~[[along]]~~ with a second stretch region (e.g., ears 697) having lateral stretch as indicated by vector 698 under the same tensile force. In this way, the first stretch region (e.g., second backsheet zone 670) stretches and conforms to the wearer before the second stretch

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region (e.g., ears 697) is substantially stretched (i.e., stretched near its limit – that is, stretched near its maximum elongation); otherwise, the first region may wrinkle, gap, and/or begin to sag. In practical terms, when the caregiver applies diaper 620 with a given application tension, the first stretch region should ~~[[preferentially]]~~ co-elongate ~~[[along]]~~ with the second stretch region instead of only beginning to elongate when the second stretch region is stretched near its limit. In preferred executions, under a laterally applied tensile load of between about 1 Newton and about 4 Newtons, the strain in the second stretch region is between at least about 10% and less than about 75%. Under the same tensile load, the strain the first stretch region is preferably greater than about 5%, more preferably greater than about 10%, and most preferably at least about equal to the strain in the second stretch region. The ~~[[preferential]]~~ co-elongation exhibited between the first and second regions may be imparted through a variety of product design configurations/techniques including, but not limited to, (a) varying the longitudinal length and/or lateral width of the first and/or second stretch zone [e.g., longitudinally taller ears/side panels compared to a longitudinally shorter backsheet zone/stretch zone] and (b) varying the tensile modulus of the first and/or second stretch zone [e.g., the tensile modulus for the backsheet zone/stretch zone may be lower than the tensile modulus for the ears/side panels].

Please amend the paragraph at Page 21, lines 18-24 as follows:

Similar to FIG. 10a, FIG. 10b shows a diaper having a side-fastened product execution which may or may not be preformed, wherein, a first stretch region (e.g., second backsheet zone 770) having lateral stretch as indicated by vector 773 ~~[[preferentially]]~~ co-elongates ~~[[along]]~~ with a second stretch region (e.g., side panels 797) having lateral stretch 798 under the same tensile force. While the term “ears” is used herein when referring to non-pant diapers and the term “side panels” is used herein when referring to pant diapers, the two terms may be used herein interchangeably when appreciating the present invention.

Please amend the paragraph at Page 22, line 27-Page 23, line 2 as follows:

The first stretch region is said to ~~[[preferentially]]~~ co-elongate with the second stretch region when: (a) the strain in the second stretch region is between at least about 10% and less than about 75% and (b) the strain the first stretch region is preferably greater than about 5%, more preferably greater than about 10%, and most preferably at least about equal to the strain in the second stretch region.